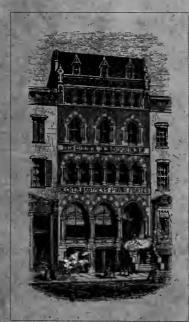
# DECKER BROTHERS.

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## PIANOS.

Po. 33 Anion Square,

Dew York.



#### CAUTION TO THE PUBLIC.

The Decker Brothers, 33 Union Square, New York, are the owners of the only patents issued by the United States Government to any one of the name of Decker, for improvements in piano-fortes.

In all genuine Decker Brothers' Pianos, the following line appears cast upon the iron plate, on the inner left hand side of the instruments:

"Decker Brothers' Patent, June 2d, 1863."

As some unscrupulous parties have, from time to time, sought to palm off inferior or wholly worthless pianos upon the public, by naming their wares "Decker Pianos," purchasers should take care to see that the above line is plainly stamped upon the iron plate precisely as here printed.

Decker Brothers have but one establishment, namely, at 33 Union Square, New York.

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## ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE

GRAND. UPRIGHT AND SQUARE

## PIANO-FORTES

DECKER BROTHERS.

WAREROOMS. 33 UNION SQUARE,

NEW YORK.

## The Music

incorporated in the following pages has been composed expressly for this Catalogue, and is issued in no other form. The first composition, page 3, is a charming SONG by the popular young composer, Mr. Alfred H. Pease; the second, page 34, is an etude of rare beauty by Professor Henry G. Andres, resident in Cincinnati; the third, page 46, is an admirable melodie by Professor J. H. Bonawitz, the celebrated pianist; and the fourth, page 58, is a fascinating waltz from the gifted pen of the eminent pianist, Mr. S. B. Mills.

## "When the Sun sinks to Rest."

Written expressly for "Decker Brothers' Illustrated Catalogue," by Alfred H. Pease.









Entered, according to Act of Congress, A. D. 1873, by Decker Bros., in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

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#### ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE.





#### The Pinno-Horte Essential to Society.

HE piano-forte is no longer an article of luxury designed exclusively for the rich, or a parlor ornament, to be kept sacredly locked except on some important family festivity. For the present generation it has become a household necessity, an unfailing source of pleasure, a powerful means for the development of musical talent and the advancement of art. Its importance to society is so universally recognized as to render the instrument everywhere an indispensable adjunct of polite life—far more essential, in fact, than the private library or the equipage. Our children are taught their notes and their letters simultaneously, and for a youth or girl of the present day to be found deficient in a knowledge of the rudiments of music would be deemed almost as reprehensible as a corresponding exhibition of ignorance of arithmetic.

The impetus given to musical taste throughout Europe and America is unquestionably due to the piano-forte, the manufacture of which has been happily facilitated to a marvellous degree by the application of steam power, aided by many mechanical inventions for supplanting hand-labor. Thus the same mysterious agent, upon whose unlimited service the world of literature, of commerce and of manufacture depends, has proved of inestimable value to the cause of musical art, rendering it possible to popularize that which otherwise must have remained the exclusive possession of the fortunate few in every community.

But this progress in expanding and supplying the musical wants of society has not been accomplished without awakening the cupidity of

#### ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE.

speculative minds, and, as a consequence, the manufacture of pianos at prices to suit the varying depths of pockets, and specially designed to baffle the detective skill of casual purchasers, has yielded no inconsiderable item in the internal revenue returns. From which it may be readily inferred that an imposing exhibit of revenue returns, for this branch of industry, does not justify the conclusion that the particular piano upon, which it may be founded is in itself a truly valuable instrument.

Nor is the loud heralded winning of a medal or certificate at a fair, whether American or International, a sufficient proof of the excellence of *all* the instruments put upon the market by the parties securing such an award. Such "triumphs" may generally be credited more properly to zeal in lobbying and wire-pulling than to unusual skill in manufacture.

These cursory observations, upon facts well understood by members of the musical profession, are not prompted by a desire to disparage the productions of competing firms, for that would indeed be but a poor reputation which could only be maintained by decrying the claims of others. The object is simply to draw public attention to the fact that neither profuse advertising, nor premiums awarded to the highest bidder, constitute all the essential recommendations of

#### A Thoroughly Good Pinno.

HE firm of Decker Brothers hazard nothing in assuming to occupy the high standard indicated in the foregoing remarks. Conversant, from their early youth, with every, even the minutest, detail of the mechanism of the piano-forte, and having filled the most responsible positions in the establishments of the best manufacturers of the time, the two brothers, David and John Jacob Decker, entered into business for themselves in the year 1862, with a ripened experience and a full appreciation of the æsthetic as well as of the commercial possibilities of their work. Their objects were, first, to produce THE VERY BEST PIANO IN THE WORLD, and then to sell it. This has been their unvarying aim throughout the past ten years, and now that their work has stood the

unerring test of time, and their business has outstripped their most sanguine anticipations, they derive their greatest satisfaction from the reputation voluntarily accorded them by the professional and amateur world, of making all their planos of equal excellence and maintaining the highest standard of perfection in manufacture that has yet been reached.

The foundation of the house of Decker Brothers was unostentatiously laid in the year 1862. A small capital, the savings of their steady industry, seemed ample for their design, which was to make a few Square pianos for retail trade in New York and its vicinity. They indulged in no rosy fancies of sudden popularity and a quickly realized fortune. Of simple tastes, they undertook the business not so much as a means to wealth as for the purpose of improving the manufacture. Being practical artizans themselves, and familiar with the capabilities of every man employed in the business in New York, they found no difficulty in securing the services of the highest skill for each department. Good mechanics prefer employment where their ability is not only well paid for, but is also properly appreciated, and the estimation in which the Decker Brothers were held was such as to cause the leading journeymen in other factories to seek engagements at their hands.

If the Deckers were superior as mechanics and strict in maintaining the highest standard of workmanship among their employes, they were equally qualified to judge of the woods and other materials used in the construction of the instrument. The younger of the brothers, John Jacob Decker, was early in life recognized as being especially gifted in this respect. Indeed, so highly were his skill and judgment appreciated, that Messrs. Raven and Bacon, one of the best esteemed pianoforte houses of the time, appointed him superintendent of their manufactory, and within three months after he had secured this responsible position, still further manifested their confidence in his rare qualifications for the business by making him a partner in their firm Mr. Decker continued in this partnership for eight years, when he withdrew to establish, with his brother, their present business.

In selecting materials the Decker Brothers' motto was, that "The Best cannot be Too Good." Among lumber merchants, ivory importers,

#### ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE.

varnish dealers, iron founders, wire makers, and in other lines of trade, it soon became known that the Deckers required the very best material that money could procure, and would take nothing less. Moreover, they effected certain radical improvements in the structure of the piano, based on a scientific comprehension of the subject and developed after long experience. These improvements justified their expectations by putting fifty per cent. more volume of tone into the instrument than was ever secured to it before.

Was it to be wondered at that their first productions astonished and delighted the musical profession?

As an example of the unusually prompt and generous recognition which their early efforts provoked in professional and critical circles, we may cite the following letter of congratulation addressed to the Messrs. Decker by the late master musician, CARL ANSCHUTZ:

Messrs. David and John Jacob Decker.

Gentlemen:—The Square pianos which you so kindly placed at my disposal for last night's concert, afforded me an unspeakable pleasure, and I believe I may say truly, that they have stamped your reputation as manufacturers of the highest class. For myself, I freely acknowledge that neither in Europe nor in the United States have I ever enjoyed the music of a piano-forte as I did last night, when your superb instruments were being played in the Opera House. Their tone is beautiful beyond expression, and as powerful as that of most Grands now in use. You have begun splendidly, and if you continue to make pianos for musicians, not merely something to sell, you will one of these days be recognized as the American Erards. For our next concert be sure and have a Grand ready.

Accept my compliments and best wishes.

Ever yours sincerely,

C. ANSCHUTZ.

New York, Dec. 22, 1862.

One of the very same instruments thus complimented by the learned maestro, and the first one bearing the name of Decker, was lately (1873) repurchased from its owner by the firm, and is now on exhibition in their warerooms. It is in excellent order, although steadily used for eleven years. The tone is full and sympathetic, and the

action unimpaired A more convincing witness of the UNRIVALLED DURABILITY of the Decker manufacture could not be desired.

It is intended to keep this piano—the Decker Brothers' Number One, and the corner stone of their present great business—permanently at their warerooms, in company with the latest products of their factory, with which it may always be compared.

It has not been deemed worth while to crowd these pages with statistics or descriptive details of the business carried on at

#### The Extensive Quantactory,

OCATED on Thirty-fifth street, west of Eighth Avenue, and extending through to Thirty-fourth street. Suffice it to say that it ranks with the factories of the older established piano-forte concerns in point of size and facilities for producing the three varieties of piano-forte, while in labor-saving machinery, designed exclusively for the various features of this manufacture, it excels all others. The Messrs. Decker have themselves invented several important machines for improving the work of construction and economizing time, and these adjuncts alone give them advantages possessed by no other piano-forte makers in the world. The number of pianos made and sold by Decker Brothers during the first ten years of their business, is greater, with one exception, than that made by any other first class establishment during a corresponding period in its history, and the ratio of increase now shown in their manufacture insures them the leadership of the trade at no distant day. Such astonishing results are only possible where REPUTATION IS BASED ON SOLID MERIT.

## Decker Brothers' Piano-Fortes.

Decker Brothers manufacture the three varieties of the piano-forte, namely, the Grand, the Boudoir, or Upright, and the Square. Their

#### Comert Grands

are deemed unsurpassed in power and beauty of tone, and faultless in action. These instruments have commanded the admiration of the most eminent artists and critics in the country, and are eagerly sought for by the leading pianists for public playing. The splendor of their tone and other prominent qualities in these pianos have been made the subject of many appreciative articles in the public press.

#### Parlor Grands.

The instruments so denominated are especially designed for parlor use. They possess a fine body of tone, governed by an easy and durable action, and in every respect are most perfectly constructed. Symmetrical in form and elegantly finished, the Grands of this pattern constitute a most attractive addition to the tastefully furnished drawing-room.

#### The Apright, or Bondoir, Pinno.

The instrument known as the Boudoir, or Upright piano-forte, has for years been admired on account of its compact construction and tasteful appearance, although its musical character lacked some of the qualities deemed indispensable by artistic players. Appreciating the important sphere which this class of pianos could be made to occupy, if once their tone were properly developed and their action rendered thoroughly efficient and reliable, Decker Brothers devoted themselves earnestly to securing this desired result. Their efforts have been most amply rewarded in every respect, and they confidently present their newly Patented Upright Pianos to the public as possessing, in a pre-eminent degree, the matchless qualities of tone and action which characterize their Grand Pianos, combined with material and workmanship that must ensure their durability to an equal extent with the best made Grand and Square instruments.

The Decker Brothers' Upright Pianos, as now perfected, have afforded the utmost satisfaction to artists in all parts of the country and, as will be seen on another page, have elicited the most gratifying endorsements from the profession generally. These instruments seem destined to supersede the Square pattern for parlor use.

#### The Square Pinuo-Fortes,

introduced by Decker Brothers in 1862, possess patented improvements to be found in no other pianos in the world. Their superior merits first brought the name of Decker into favor with the public and secured them the voluntary endorsement of the profession. Thousands of these instruments have been sold within the past few years, and in no case have they failed to give the fullest satisfaction, or to realize the highest expectations of purchasers—a fact that can be substantiated by innumerable letters volunteered to the manufacturers.

#### Decker Brothers' School Pinno-Horte.

To meet the demand for a serviceable instrument for pupils, Messrs. Decker Brothers are manufacturing a Square piano-forte possessing all the advantages of their patented improvements, and differing from their parlor styles only in the expensive particular of exterior ornament. This School Piano-Forte has a beautifully finished black walnut case, similar in design to Style No. 2 (shown on another page), while in point of tone, durability, excellence of material and thoroughness of workmanship, it is equal to their higher priced patterns.

#### The Cone and Action.

The same superiority of workmanship and tone is uniformly maintained in all the several styles and varieties of the piano-forte made by this firm. The same RICH SINGING QUALITY of TONE is found in their Square, Upright and Grand Pianos, varying only in fullness and power. This tone is peculiar to the DECKER BROTHERS' instruments, and is easily distinguished from that of any other make by its brilliant purity, warmth, delicacy and expanding power. Its elastic nature renders it especially obedient to the requirements of the artist's fastidious taste, enabling him to graduate the power and volume of tone to the utmost limit of expression with absolute certainty and ease. This is particularly noticeable in their Upright, or Boudoir Pianos, and is most perfectly realized in their improved CONCERT GRANDS. For their achievements in the manufacture of these two classes of the piano-forte, the Decker Brothers have received from the leading journals of New York an amount of unqualified praise such as was never before lavished upon the productions of piano makers.

A requisite, second to none other, in a well made piano, is the Action. If this be inexact, in ever so slight a degree, the musical character of the instrument is lessened, and the task of the pianist increased. The unreliable character of even the best French Actions, imported for the use of American manufac-

#### ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE.

turers, compelled the Messrs. Decker to manufacture their own Actions. This they have done for a number of years, and to their scrupulous care in the mechanism of this prominent feature may be credited much of the success that has caused their instruments to be recognized in the highest musical circles, as the choicest known.

#### The Exterior Hinish.

It is needless to say that where so much persistent effort has been made to attain perfection in the essential musical portion of the instrument, equal care has also been bestowed upon the exterior finish. The Decker Brothers' pianos are all fashioned out of the finest materials that can be procured the world over, constructed with the utmost skill and precision, and finished with elaborate care and taste. Every piano is built to last, and, with moderate care, there is no reason why an instrument so much more substantial in all its component parts than any other now made should not afford effective service for a life time.

#### Hints to Purchasers.

When selecting a piano-forte it is important to remember,

- 1. That a cheap piano will always prove to be a poor piano.
- 2. That there is more economy in buying a really first-class instrument, at a reasonable figure, than in purchasing another merely because it is much cheaper.
- 3. The best work and the best material insure the best results, and, therefore, command the best price.
- 4. The foundation of a good pianist is a good instrument and a capable teacher. It is wrong to expect a child to progress if forced to practice on a rattle-trap, and, no matter how attractive its case, the cheap piano is sure to become a rattle-trap within a very short time.
- 5. DURABILITY of TONE, and the POWER of STANDING in TUNE LONGER than any other piano made, are the characteristics of the Decker Brothers' Piano-forte.
- 6. A DECKER BROTHERS' Piano can never fail to prove a safe and profitable investment, for its reputation, based on its matchless musical character and unrivaled durability, must always command for it a corresponding high price, if resold, no matter how long it may have been in careful use.

#### То Цинаск и Рінпо.

Unscrew the lid of the box and lift it off; take out the lyre and legs of the piano, remove the board across the inside of the box and unscrew the four upright pieces by which the piano is held down in each corner. Next, place a couple of strong, wide-bottomed chairs, or benches, beside the box toward the back of the piano, and move the piano a few inches toward that end of the box where the legs were packed. Four person, one at each corner, may now lift the piano out of the box and place it upon its back on the two chairs, or benches.

Then, let the cross-boards be unscrewed on either end of the bottom, adjust the lyre into its proper place, and put the legs (numbered 1, 2, 3, 4,) into their respective sockets. The assistants may now lift the piano off the chairs and stand it on its legs, taking care that these all touch the floor at the same time. After unlocking the instrument with the key attached to the lyre, remove the paper protecting the piano, and gently dust the case and keys with a silk handkerchief or a piece of chamois leather.

#### The Care of a Piano.

Too much systematic care cannot be taken of an instrument so sensitive to the variations of temperature. This climate, so trying to humanity, from its sudden fluctuations of heat and cold and alternations of wet and dry weather, is equally injurious to the musical constitution of the piano-forte. All that can be done to insure durability, in spite of these uncontrollable causes, is done by the Messrs. Decker. If their foresight in providing the most serviceable material, and subjecting it to the severest tests, be supplemented by the cautious and systematic attention of buyers of their pianos, deterioration, from the causes named, can be almost indefinitely thwarted.

The temperature to which a piano should be exposed is about 70° Fahrenheit, both summer and winter. This is the average temperature of a parlor. The piano should not stand so as to receive the full force of the heat from a fire, nor be exposed to cold draughts. It is, however, from a DAMP ATMOSPHERE that pains should always be taken to keep the household treasure. An excellent method for warding off the ill effects of moist weather is to use a cloth cover.

While practice or playing upon the piano does not depreciate it in the least, the idle pounding of the key-board by children is highly detrimental to the tone, and renders tuning more frequently necessary.

Pianos are no more playthings for infants than are clocks and watches. Like our time-pieces, properly used, they may serve us for many long years, but if abused they soon begin to tell the story of ill-treatment.

#### To Stop Rattling or Jarring Doises in a Piano.

It often happens that a pin or other trifling particle is accidently dropped upon the sound-board; to remove it, use a pair of bellows. The bellows should be frequently employed to remove the dust which unavoidably collects within the exposed portions of the instrument. Another simple cause of rattling arises from unevenness in the floor, whereby the piano is made to stand on three legs, and the castor of the fourth leg rattles with every stroke of the hammers. Of course this trouble can only be overcome by moving the instrument to a level portion of the floor, or by inserting a wedge under the castor creating the annoyance.

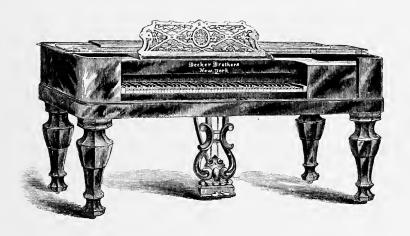
It is well to keep the piano closed when not in use, but it is not desirable that it should remain uninterruptedly closed for a length of time. Whether played upon or not, it should be occasionally opened so that the light may strike the keys, to prevent the every from becoming discolored.

ILLUSTRATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF STYLES.

## Style 1.

Rosewood Case, large front round corners, moulding on plinth, beveled top, Gothic legs, carved lyre, scroll desk, patent full iron frame and overstrung Scale. 7 Octaves.

## Style 1.



Price, - - \$625.

## Style 2.

Rosewood Case, large front round corners, moulding on plinth, beveled top, carved legs, scroll desk, Decker Brothers' patent full iron frame, overstrung new scale. Made both with and without Agraffes, and also with Agraffe treble. 7 Octaves.

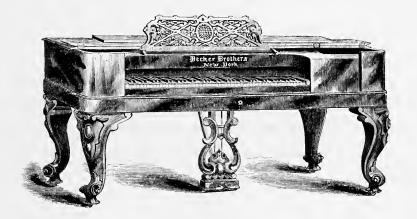
Also, a

BLACK WALNUT PIANO-FORTE,

similar in appearance to Style No. 2, with the same superior interior work. 7 Octaves.



## Style 2.



Price, (without Agraffes,) \$650.

With Agraffe Treble, \$660. With Agraffes throughout, \$685.

BLACK WALNUT PIANO-FORTE.

Price, - - - - \$500.

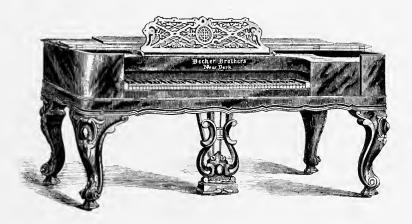




## Style 5.

Rosewood Case, large front round corners, fancy serpentine moulding around bottom, moulding on plinth, beveled top, extra carved legs, carved lyre, scroll desk, Decker Brothers' patent full iron frame, overstrung new scale. Made both with and without Agraffes. 7 and 7\frac{1}{3} Octaves.

### Style 5.



Price, (without Agraffes, 7 Octaves, 2 Strings), \$735.

With Agraffes throughout, 7 Octaves, 2 Strings, - \$770. With Agraffes throughout and 7½ Octaves, 3 Strings, \$780.

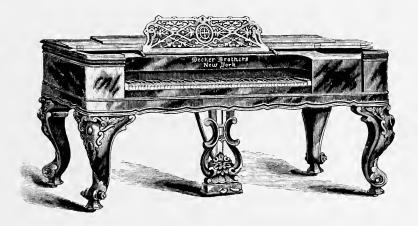
## Style 7.

Rosewood Case, large front round corners, fancy serpentine moulding around bottom, moulding on plinth, broad moulding on rim, beveled top, handsomely carved legs, beautifully carved lyre, scroll desk, Decker Brothers' patent full iron frame, overstrung new scale. Made both with and without Agraffes. 7 Octaves.





## Style 7.



Price, (without Agraffes,) \$800.

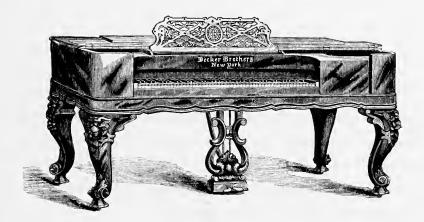
With Agraffes throughout, - - - \$835.



## Style 9.

Rosewood Case, four round corners, front and back finished alike, very fine fancy serpentine moulding around bottom, moulding on plinth, beveled top, elaborately carved legs, carved lyre, scroll desk, Decker Brothers' patent full iron frame, overstrung new scale. Made both with and without Agraffes. 7 Octaves.

## Style 9.



Price, (without Agraffes), \$885.

With Agraffes throughout, \$920.

## Square Grand.

Rosewood Case, four round corners, front and back finished alike, fine fancy serpentine moulding around bottom, broad veneered moulding and additional rich pearl moulding on rim, beveled top, extra fine carved and ornamented legs, splendidly carved double Dolphin lyre, scroll desk, Decker Brothers' patent full iron frame, overstrung new scale. Made only with Agraffes throughout. 3 Strings. 7\frac{1}{3} Octaves.

## Square Grand.

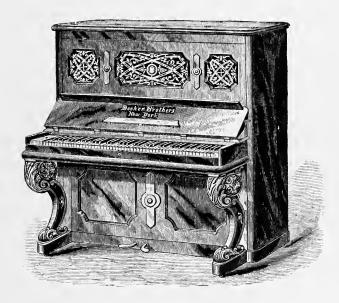


Price, - - \$1,000.

## Patent Apright.

Extra fine Rosewood Case, with carvings and tasteful fretwork panel, original and strongest iron frame, longest overstrung, patent spiral spring hammers, patent action, new scale, Agraffe bridge. 3 Strings. 7\frac{1}{3} Octaves.

## Patent Upright.

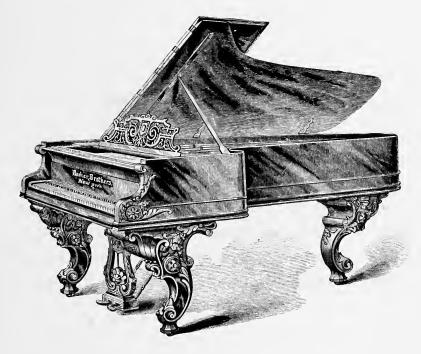


Price, - - \$850

## Full Congert Grand.

Extra fine Rosewood Case, double curvature and Decker Brothers' patent clamped rim, handsomely ornamented with carvings and mouldings, heavy, elaborately carved legs and lyre, desk of original design, beveled top, novel iron frame, improved French double repeating action, Agraffe bridge throughout. 3 Strings. 7\frac{1}{3} Octaves.

## Full Concert Grand.



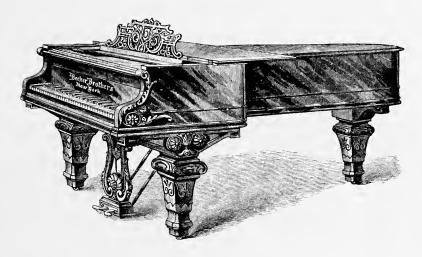
Price, - - \$1,500

## Grand, No. 2.

Extra fine Rosewood Case, double curvature and Decker Brothers' patent clamped rim, handsomely ornamented with carvings and mouldings, heavy, elaborately carved Gothic legs and lyre, desk of original design, beveled top, novel iron frame, improved French double repeating action, Agraffe bridge throughout. 3 Strings. 7½ Octaves.



# Grand, No. 2.



Price, - - \$1,850.

### ETUDE.

Composed expressly for "Decker Brothers' Illustrated Catalogue," by Henry G. Andres.



Entered, according to Act of Congress, A. D. 1873, by Decker Bros., in the Offics of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.







# Patents.

The ambition of the Decker Brothers was not only to make a good instrument, but to make the best. Their ability to decide what was the best, no manufacturers who had for a time enjoyed the advantages of their skill and superior comprehension of the subject, could deny. The firm devoted all their energy to adding to and improving the quality of tone in pianos, a task that necessitated close study and experiment, since it involved the application of a new method in the use of the Full Metallic Plate. This the Messrs. Decker satisfactorily accomplished.

The Scientific American of June 20, 1863, thus describes this first improvement over existing methods of manufacture in this important part of the piano-forte:

"IMPROVEMENT IN PIANO-FORTES.—This invention consists of an improved construction of what is termed in piano-fortes the full metallic plate, whereby the bringing any of the string-bearings on any such plate is avoided; thus bringing the connections of the strings with the tuning pins on wooden bearings, and so close to the wrest-plank as to prevent the leverage and great strain on the pins, which is unavoidable when the strings pass over the plate, as has commonly been the case when the plate has been used. By these means is obviated the only objection heretofore existing to the use of such plate, which is so advantageous in all other respects. Decker Bros., N. Y., are the inventors of this improvement."

The N. Y. World of Oct. 23, 1863, thus endorsed the invention:

"Musical.—Messrs. Decker Brothers have adopted a simple modification in the structure of their piano-fortes, whereby the strings are freed from deleterious contact with the iron frame, and are at the same time more firmly secured to the pins. How to string pianos without overlapping a metal surface has been a knotty question with makers ever since iron frames were substituted for wooden, the fact being apparent to ordinary ears that the strain imposed upon the string by the metal rim deprived it of much of its resident musical quality. Accordingly, the solution to the problem, arrived at in the instance under consideration, results in the production of a vastly stronger, nobler and clearer tone than is derived from instruments ordinarily made. The scale, too, is better balanced throughout, and the singing quality of the treble notes is developed to an extent no less agreeable than surprising. These instruments being constructed with unusual skill and care, and supplied with an action of peculiar delicacy and precision merit the attention of connoisseurs and cannot fail to obtain celebrity."

### Patents obtained by the Decker Brothers.

No. 1. June 2, 1863.—This patent was for an improved construction of the Full Metallic Plate, whereby the bringing of the string-bearings on such plate is

obviated and the connections of the strings with the tuning pins are secured close to the wrest-plank, thus preventing the leverage and great strain on the pins which is unavoidable when the strings pass over the plate, as in the old method of construction. The only objections heretofore existing to the use of the Full Iron Plate are thus removed, and its many advantages correspondingly increased.

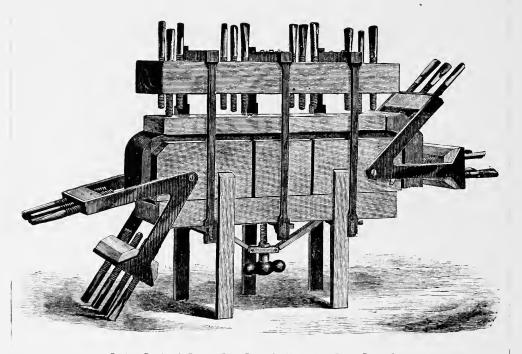
- No. 2. January 29, 1867. Second Improvement in the use of the Full Iron Plate.—This patent was issued for a still further improvement in the use of the Full Iron Plate, and also for a new system by which the connections of the strings close to the wrest-plank are obtained, thereby strengthening the plank and reducing the leverage on all the pins. The latter part of this invention is applicable not only to pianos employing the Full Iron Plate, but also to others.
- No. 3. January 10, 1865. The New Agraffes System.—In all Grand, and in some Square piano-fortes, what are known as Agraffes are used to connect the strings with the wrest-plank; but it has hitherto been found impracticable in the Square instrument, and difficult in the Grand, to apply them in the treble portion of the scale without screwing them into the iron plate, which is objectionable on account of its giving the strings a hard and impure tone. The difficulty has arisen from the extreme shortness of the strings. This difficulty is fully overcome by means of Decker Brothers' Agraffe, which is so constructed as to admit of its being screwed directly into the wood of the wrest-plank, instead of entering the iron plate, the only method before known, and which was highly detrimental to the tone.
- **No. 4.** July 26, 1872 This invention relates to pianos having an upright action, and consists in a novel application of a spiral spring which throws the hammer back, whereby a lively action is obtained for the hammer, and the usual strap for completing this backward motion is dispensed with. An additional feature of this invention consists in a new mode of adjusting the action in Upright pianos, whereby the whole action may be turned back or away from the strings, to permit adjustment or repair, without removing it from the case.
- Nos. 5 and 6. Additional Patents.—Still other patents have been granted to this firm for improvements in the application of the veneer to the cases of Square and Grand Pianos, by which their durability is greatly promoted. These patents are dated respectively January 12, 1869, and July 5th, 1870. Thus, not content with improving the piano in several important features of its interior mechanism, the Messrs. Decker have provided special appliances for adding to the efficiency of labor. While under the old method nearly half an hour was required for applying the veneers to a Double Round Rim, by the Decker Brothers' patent process the same work is better done in only FIVE MINUTES. Such results are accomplished in no other establishment in the world, and are absolutely unattainable except by the use of the Decker Brothers' patents.

Patent Rim Press for Veneering.—The following description of this novel and useful invention is taken from the American Artisan of March 15, 1873:

"We give herewith an engraving of one of the most practical, and, in its particular department, one of the most useful improvements that have lately come under our notice. Our artist has so admirably delineated the invention and its

application while in use, that it will not be necessary for us to explain any details of its construction. The inventors, Messrs. Decker Bros., N. Y., are well-known piano manufacturers, and they have achieved for their instruments a most enviable reputation. Being practically familiar with all the details of the manufacture, and thorough mechanics, they set themselves to work to devise a machine to reduce the labor and time generally occupied in applying veneers to the cases of pianofortes, and to otherwise improve the process.

"It is well-known that this is one of the most tedious and exacting processes in the manufacture of pianos, and the invention illustrated has reduced the time



Decker Brothers' Patent Rim Press for Veneering Piano-Forte Cases.

necessary to perform it to one-sixth that usually employed; in other words, the work which formerly took one-half an hour now occupies only five minutes, and when done, is performed in a better manner than by the old process.

"The engraving shows the body of a piano as it appears when held in position by the apparatus. The machine has been in operation for a considerable time at the manufactory of the Decker Bros., and is constantly and successfully employed there for the purpose specified."



# Professional Endorsements.

After having examined the piano-fortes of Messrs. Decker Brothers very carefully, we have come to the conclusion and cheerfully testify, that they are in every respect superior instruments. Their tone is pure, rich, brilliant, very distinct, and of an entirely musical character. Their workmanship is of the very best, plainly demonstrating that none but the best materials are used, and their touch, evenness and quality of tone throughout the whole compass of the key-board, unsurpassed by any other piano-forte we have ever seen.

S. B. MILLS.

JOHANN HEINRICH BONAWITZ.

THEODORE THOMAS.

ALFRED H. PEASE.

WILLIAM MASON.
F. L. RITTER.
JOHN ZUNDEL.
CARL KLAUSER.

RUTHERFORD PARK, NEW JERSEY, January, 28, 1873.

MR. C. F. THURSTON.

Dear Friend:—You are aware of Mrs. Riggs' predisposition towards the piano and of her reluctance to think of purchasing any other.

It is due to you therefore that I inform you of the perfect satisfaction we both of us find in the piano from Decker Brothers, which you kindly selected for us. We are delighted with it. Though inclined to be critical at first, we can discover nothing whatever about it which we think could be bettered. If we are judges,

#### THE DECKER BROTHERS'

it is already perfect. It is brilliant without being metallic; it is powerful without being harsh. Indeed, I may say for myself, at least, that I never heard some of the qualities of its tone in any other piano. I never heard any other piano which so completely filled the air of a house with pure music as this does.

Please accept our thanks for calling our attention to this instrument and for your kindness in securing it to us.

Yours, very truly,

HERMAN C. RIGGS,
Pastor of the Presbyterian Church.

CINCINNATI, January 31, 1873.

MR. FRANK H. KING, Gen. Ag't Decker Bros'. Pianos, New York.

Dear Sir:—Your favor to me of the 24th inst., in which you ask my opinion of the Decker Bros'. Piano, has just reached me. In reply, I take great pleasure in saying, that in my opinion, all the pianos manufactured by your firm (Grand, Upright and Square) are as near perfection in tone, touch, singing quality, thoroughness in construction, and power of standing in tune, as money and skill can produce. The new Upright that I examined at the warerooms of your Agent here astonished and delighted me. It has the tone and power of a full Concert Grand, while the bass tones are entirely free from the disagreeable "tubbiness" that is found in all other Uprights that have come under my observation. The action is very simple and durable. In my opinion, it will become the home piano of the future. A widespread acquaintance with musicians, formed during my connection with the late Russian Concert Troupe, as conductor and director, enables me to say that the Decker Bros'. Piano is considered by a very large majority of them to be the best manufactured. I use your instrument at all my concerts, wherever obtainable, and cheerfully recommend it to all my pupils and friends.

With my kind wishes for the success of both yourself and beautiful instruments, I am, very respectfully,

LEON JASIEWICZ,

Conductor of the late Russian Concert Troupe.

MR. FRANK H. KING.

Dear Sir\*:—I fully endorse the above letter of Mr. Leon Jasiewicz in every particular, especially that portion of it that relates to the Upright. I am free to confess that the Upright manufactured by Decker Bros is the first and only one that entirely pleased me in every particular. It is a Grand piano in an Upright case. The Concert Grands I consider superior to any I have ever used, and I am surprised that your firm did not introduce them to the profession years ago. Had I known of their great merits I never would have used or recommended any other.

With pleasure,

HENRY G. ANDRES, Pianist.

Cincinnati, Feb. 3, 1873.

CINCINNATI, February 4, 1873.

D. H. BALDWIN, Esq., Western Agent Decker Bros.' Pianos.

Dear Sir:—In reply to your question I will say that for nearly thirty years I have been in the business of making and repairing pianos, having worked in the most noted factories in Paris. While in this city, pianos of all the best makers of this country have come to me for repairs. In none of them have I found that perfection of material and work, even to the smallest details, which I have found in the Decker Brothers' instruments. I regard these pianos as being, in every respect, the finest and most durable, without any exception, of any that I have seen. The new Upright piano which I examined at you rooms, is the best I have ever met with in this country. Its full, rich, clear and crisp tone is as powerful as that of a Concert Grand. The evenness of the entire scale, the freedom of the bass tones from the disagreeable, hollow, short tone so generally characteristic of the Upright pianos its great strength and consequent power of standing in tune, the simplicity and durability of its action, all combine to make it the most desirable instrument for the parlor now manufactured.

Very respectfully,

J. JABERG,

Piano Maker.

[From H.]. Nothnagel, twenty-one years Professor of Music at the Institute of the Blind, Columbus, Ohio.]

COLUMBUS, O., Feb. 1, 1873.

MESSRS, DECKER BROS., 33 Union Square, New York.

Gentlemen:—Within the short period of ten years, you have achieved an immense success. You have shown what men can accomplish by earnestness of purpose, excellence of workmanship, and true modesty. Your Patent Square has stood the test of severe criticism during that period, and justly won the reputation of a first class instrument, having NO SUPERIORS. Your Grand and that GEM of an Upright, both of recent date, have not only given general satisfaction, but they have already become great favorites with amateurs and artists. This you have accomplished in your usual modest way. Your title to a place in the front rank of first class manufacturers is clear and undeniable.

The general tone of your instruments is round, full, far-reaching, sympathetic, beautiful and brilliant, of a peculiar quality, attracting immediately the attention of the intelligent hearer, and winning his favor. Admirable promptness and precision of action, elasticity and evenness of touch, enabling the performer to produce the numerous gradations of shading, from the softest pianissimo to the loudest fortissimo, with perfection, also the unimpaired beauty and distinctness of tone when their full power is brought into play, are distinguishing traits of your instruments, eminently adapting them to give a just and perfect rendition of the works of our piano-forte classics.

Yours truly,

H. J. NOTHNAGEL.





CINCINNATI, February, 1873.

D. H. BALDWIN, Esq., Western Agent Decker Bros.' Pianos.

Dear Sir:—The Decker Brothers' piano-forte purchased of you, April 13, 1866, for the use of the 13th District School in this city, has given entire satisfaction. It has stood the wear of seven years' hard usage better than any other manufacture used in the school. I cheerfully recommend it as a superior instrument.

J. Schmidt, Teacher of Music in Public Schools.

CINCINNATI, February 12, 1873.

MR. D. H. BALDWIN, Western Agent Decker Bros.' Pianos.

Dear Sir:—The Decker Brothers' piano, purchased of you, in 1867, for the use of the 12th District School in this city, has given entire satisfaction in every particular. Its tone and action are as good now as when new, after more than six years of severe usage in our school. It has stood in tune surprisingly well. I regard it superior to any other manufactured.

Belle L. Black, Teacher in 12th District School.

I fully agree with Miss Black in her opinion of your piano. Very respectfully,

THOS. SCANLAN,
Principal 12th District School.

The following certificate is from Prof. Karl Merz, author of "Musical Hints for the Million," and "Musical World Letter," published under the nom de plune of K. Z., Associate Editor "Brainard's Musical World," and for eleven years the professor in charge of the Musical Department of the Oxford Female Seminary. It is the first and only certificate he has ever given in favor of any piano-fort.

OXFORD, Ohio, February 7, 1873.

FRANK H. KING, Esq., Gen'l Agent Decker Bros.' Pianos, New York.

I have fully tested your instruments, and cheerfully testify to their superior qualifications. The Upright of your manufacture is decidedly the best of which I have any knowledge.

Yours truly,

KARL MERZ.

CHICAGO, March 14, 1873.

FRANK H. KING, ESQ., Gen'l Agent Decker Bros.' Pianos, New York.

Dear Sir:—In reply to your inquiry as to my opinion of your piano-fortes, I would say that, after a thorough test, in public and private, I consider them equal to any piano-forte in the world, and would cheerfully recommend them to all my friends and the musical public as strictly first-class pianos in every respect. I use them at all my concerts, whenever I can obtain them.

Very truly yours,

EMIL LEIBLING, Pianist.



CLEVELAND, March 15, 1873.

Mr. B. Dreher, Gen'l Agent Decker Bros.' Pianos for Northern Ohio.

Dear Sir:-I take pleasure in acknowledging the surpassing merits of the Decker Brothers' Pianos in every respect. The remarkable elasticity and equality of touch, brilliancy, power and beauty of tone, combined with the solidity of construction and beautiful finish, make it at once a piano to be desired by every artist, for the concert room as well as the parlor.

A. Nuss.

Prof. of Music and Director of the Cleveland Gesang Verein.

CLEVELAND, 1873.

Messrs. Decker Brothers.

Gentlemen: - Having had many years of experience in the profession, and the fullest opportunity of testing the merits of a great number of pianos from the principal makers, I unhesitatingly pronounce the Decker Pianos as unsurpassed in every quality that pertains to a first class instrument. Such pure and sympathetic quality of tone, promptness and elasticity and evenness of action, I have never found in any other first class piano to the same degree of perfection; and it will afford me extreme pleasure at any time, to communicate to others, as I now do to you, my honest and unsolicited opinion, that Decker Brothers' pianos are in all respects the best instruments in this country.

> J. Underner, Director Cleveland Conservatory of Music.

> > CLEVELAND, March 5, 1873.

B. Dreher, Esq.:

Dear Sir:-It is now about nine years since I bought one of the Decker Brothers' pianos of you. It was the first piano of that firm sold in this city, and I can testify in all sincerity, that every year has increased my admiration for this instrument; for although it has been in constant use, it has never relinquished its beautiful tone nor its elasticity of action.

Respectfully,

L. Krüger.

### D. H. BALDWIN, Western Agent Decker Bros.' Pianos, Cincinnati.

Dear Sir: - During the month of September, 1871, we were appointed by the Mendelssohn Union, of this city, as a special committee to purchase a piano for the use of the Society. We were not prejudiced in favor of either of the manufacturers or dealers, and the question of price had no bearing in our decision. We were earnestly and honestly seeking for the best piano. After a thorough and patient test of all the different first-class makers, we purchased a Decker Brothers', as in our judgment being the better instrument. After eighteen months' severe use in our hall, we are as well pleased, if not better, than when we first purchased it, and cheerfully recommend it as a superior instrument in every respect.

H. C. HAHN, Musical Director.

E. H. VAN HOESEN, Pres't.

GEORGE D. BROW, Chairman Ex. Com.

## MELODIE.

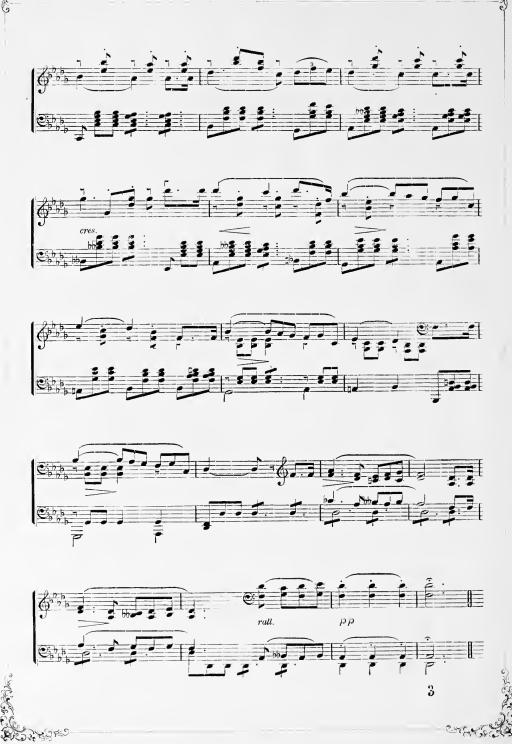
Composed expressly for "Decker Brothers' Illustrated Catalogue," and dedicated to

Mrs. EUGENE AUBERT, of New York,



Entered, according to Act of Congress, A. D. 1873. by Decker Bros., in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.







# Opinions of the Press.

[From the N. V. Tribune, April 23, 1864.]

IMPROVEMENT IN PIANO-FORTES .- One of the simplest and most truly valuable improvements yet made in the piano-forte, is that invented and patented by the firm of Decker Brothers, in this city. It is, we presume, pretty generally understood that for a number of years past the best pianos have been supplied with what is termed the full iron plate, by which means increased durability is obtained for the instrument. As heretofore constructed, however, the application of the plate has necessitated that the bearings of the strings at one and should come upon a portion of the iron, and from this fact arises an impure quality of tone, exceedingly unsatisfactory to the educated ear, and which is commonly designated as "wiry." Messrs. Decker's object has been to remedy this great defect, by judiciously contriving to bring all the connections of the strings with the tuning-pins upon wooden bearings. At the same time, these connections are made so much closer to the wrestplank as to largely reduce the leverage or strain on the several pins, a condition that causes the process of tuning to be more easily accomplished, and also contributes to keep the instrument up to the true pitch, when tuned, for a much longer period than usual. By correcting the only imperfections arising from the use of the full ironplate, and that, too, by not detracting in the slightest degree from its many positive advantages, the Messrs. Decker have developed in their instruments a tone at once admirable for its purity, fullness, prolongation and sweetness, and the high estimation in which their improvement is held is well shown in the rapidly increasing business of their firm.

[From The World, N. Y., March 30, 1873.]

The Messrs. Decker Brothers, of Union Square, are sending to the concert-room Grand pianofortes that have at once challenged comparison with the productions of those establishments which have by right long monopolized the privilege of furnishing artists with instruments for public use. To have exacted the favor of the fastidious few whom genius or an excess of talent has commissioned to keep alive popular interest in musical art is in itself an acknowledgment that the merits of these new instruments are substantially based. The reputation of an artist can be so easily imperiled through the employment of a defective instrument, that great care is exercised when a piano has to be selected for concert work. On the other hand, if a reputation can be injuriously affected through the inefficiency of a piano, it may be strengthened by the favoring fortune of having a superior instrument wherewith to enforce its claims.

The pianos of the firm alluded to are enriched with a singularly full, far-reaching body of tone, of the purest quality, governed by an action so accurately balanced as to materially lessen the fatigue of playing, while at the same time it enforces with unequalled precision and fluency the performer's demands for variety of expression. These attributes have been sufficiently demonstrated in recent classical concerts given in this city and Philadelphia. It is impossible to suppose a more perfect gradation of tone-power than is procurable from one of these instruments when skillfully fingered, and the scale is certainly incomparable in that essential feature, a uniform quality of tone from the foundation note to the vanishing point of musical sound.



The introduction of instruments possessing so many superlative features of excellence has naturally afforded peculiar pleasure to the frequenters of the concert-room, here and elsewhere, and has doubtless proved particularly gratifying to artists of the higher rank, whose superior gifts and attainments qualify them to appreciate most promptly and fully the perfection which has been attained by the Messrs. Decker Brothers in the manufacture of pianofortes.

[From Watson's Art Journal, March 29, 1873.]

(From a critical review of Mr. J. H. Bonawitz's piano-forte recital at the Philadelphia Academy of Music.)

Mr. Bonawitz was received with great distinction, and performed the programme upon a Grand piano and an Upright manufactured by Decker Brothers, of New York.

The piano responded to his touch most admirably, and answered every call he made upon its power, so that its resonance was too free and too voluminous for the large and beautiful foyer of the Academy. His interpretation of the "Appassionata" sonata was clear, intellectual, sympathetic and carnestly inpassioned, his fine technique sufficing for its mechanical difficulties and his rare artistic instinct developing the countless high thoughts and subtle heanties of the work.

Mozart's delicious Fantasie, and Schumann's Novelette, were played by Mr. Benawitz upon Decker Brothers' Upright piano. The compositions were exactly suited to the character of the instrument, which, though remarkable for power, possessed a deliciously tender and sympathetic quality of tone, differing from all other classes of piano-fortes, and surpassing them in their aesthetic beauty of quality. We have never heard any instrument in the orchestra whose tone was more refined and sympathetically heautiful.

Mr. Bonawitz played both pieces most exquisitely, also bis own beautiful Nocturne Elegiaque. In all, the little Upright told out with admirable effect; not only were its tones round, head and melodious, but its power was all sufficient, pianissimo passages being heard with perfect distinctness at the other end of the hall. The little Upright asserted its right to be heard in public; and it fully made good its claim.

Liszt's Rhapsodie, and Bonawitz's transcription of "Luther's Hymn," are splendid display pieces, affording tests for brilliant and dashing brayura playing, and in these Mr. Bonawitz put forth his whole power and frirly carried the audience with him. He executed them with rare spirit and accuracy and with a brilliance and power such as we have rarely heard.

He tried Decker Brothers' Grand piano to the utmost limits of resistance without breaking, and the splendid piano stood the test without flinching, or wavering in tone, pouring out a volume of sound that would have tilled a hall four times the size of the Academy foyer. The exhibition of these beautiful instruments brings Decker Bros. into the very small circle of first-class manufacturers, and establishes their position in the very front rank of the most celebrated makers of the country.

[From the Chicago Tribune, May 5, 1871.]

Messrs. Decker Brothers, of New York, not content with the reputation of making one of the very best Square pianos, have lately brought out a "Grand Piano," which has attracted much attention from musicians and the press in that city, and is said to be conceded by the hest judges to be the "King of all Grand Pianos."

[From The Season, N. Y., Feb. 18, 1871.]

In the race for prestige in the well-filled domain of piano-forte manufacture, it has rarely happened that the goal has been touched so easily as in the case of the house of Decker Brothers. Attention has been called to their instruments from time to time by musical writers, and in these expressions of opinion upon the merits of the piano-forte fashioned under their skilled direction there has been a unanimity of compliment too frankly conveyed to be gainsaid. Starting upon a standard of excellence that challenged competition on all sides, the Decker Piano has during ten years steadily advanced in the estimate of the artist-world. What a Jurgensen watch is among time-keepers, the Decker Piano may be deemed among its Cecilian species. It were needless to specify in detail the points of beauty which it reveals when under the inspiring touch of a master-player. Let it suffice that its music is the purest, the sweetest, the most sympathetic that the dreamy tone-poet can imagine. Such harmonics as these would have found a responsive ceho in the romantic soul of Gottschalk.

[From Watson's Art Journal, June 17, 1871.]

Mr. Mills played upon one of Decker Brothers' Grand Piano-fortes, and proved it to be a concert instrument of splendid powers, with capacity to fill the largest concert hall, whether its tone be forced by power or wooed by the tenderest touch. The hall in which Mr. Mills tested the power of the Decker Grand is not acoustically good, and, in such a case, the piano, of all instruments, suffers the most; but this instrument, under Mr. Mills's strong, yet delicate touch, asserted itself, and its softest tones, however rapidly uttered, were heard with perfect individual dis-

tinctness in every part of the hall. In Tausig's piece, its deep, rich, sonorous tone was heard to advantage, and it seemed to fully respond in power to the needs of the player, for although he enforced it with full strength, the strings still gave out in response a full, unbroken tone. In Mills's "Recollections," passages of exquisite delicacy surround the themes; these would fall dead, however finely executed, if the piano was deficient in brilliant, melodious distinctness, but on this occasion every note told, and while the middle tones sang out the themes with vocal richness, the brilliant showers of notes in the right hand, reached the ear with perfect and beautiful distinctuess. The scale passages in this piece revealed also the admirable equality and finely graduated tones of the scale.

This exposition has satisfied us that Decker Brothers' Grand Piane-fortes possess the necessary qualities for concert purposes. Their tone is large; the quality rich, melodious and sonorous-points which are preserved, with graduation through the entire scale. The quality is also ripe and sympathetic, and its singing power is positive and well defined. Withal it is extremely brilliant, and its vibrations in response to the touch are so prompt that every note is distinct in passages of the greatest rapidity. Decker Brothers have achieved a positive success; have established their position beyond controversy; and we cordially welcome them into that very limited family of manufacturers whose Grand Pianos are esteemed by artists, as fully worthy to be used for concert purposes.

[From the Golden Age, March 1, 1873.]

Even the most casual reader must have remarked some of the numerous comments called forth by the public performance upon a Grand piano-forte, made by the Decker Brothers, at a concert recently given in this city for a benevolent object. The persistency with which the chosen critics of journalism drew attention to the superior characteristics of an instrument comparatively new to concert goers, awakened our curiosity at the moment, especially as the dictionary of eulogy seemed to have been exhausted by writers conscientiously anxious to do justice to their subject. Seldom do the cautious expounders of public thought commit themselves so unreservedly in favor of a piano as has been done in this particular instance, and perhaps it was for this reason that the circumstance produced a more than customary impression on our mind, and led us to perform a visit of investigation, to satisfy our own ears of the righteousness of so unanimous a verdict.

Before penetrating behind the scenes of manufacture, it may be well to observe that two great

classes of piano-fortes are produced—one con sisting of those instruments which are designed to gratify the cultivated musical taste of society, the other comprising those thinly veneered shams gotten up to serve the whimsies of folks whose appreciation of style is greater than any devotion they can feel for art. Sometimes, though not often, the unsuspecting, disciple of the Muse mistakes the second of these classes for the first, and invests the financial evidences of years of self-sacrifice in a gaudy trunk full of noise.

Then with it comes home to him the fact that there are pianos which are not pianos, but only a combination of indescribable junk, pine boards mucilaginous varnish and nightmare. Then is the fount of nucledy in the recesses of this scandalized purchaser's soul congealed, while the blossoms of his genius wither under the nipping frost of disappointment. In vain does he upbraid the dealer who put this sorry bargain upon him. Were not his means limited, and did he not demand an instrument for a specified low price?

But generally it may be presumed that the buyers of the Cheap John pianos are abundantly satisfied if their purchases will only stand quietly on their legs, irrespective of any attempt at standing in tune. There is no cause for fear of their exploding, for the tension of the wires is too slack to induce that catastrophe, even though the case be as pie-crust.

It is this species of ear torturer that infests the average boarding-house purlor, and on summer evenings dissemiuates headache throughout whole neighborhoods. Nobody has yet been sent to the penitentiary for creating such calathumpian instruments, but the dealers in them should be put in the same category with the bogus watch vender and mock auctioneer; and this act of justice we shall get passed whenever the soul of music shall enter into our legislative bodies.

And now to resume. We visited the great cradle of the Decker piano, an establishment covering a dozen or more city lots, on Thirty-Fourth and Thirty-Fifth streets, west of the Eighth avenue, and soon found ourselves amid all stages of melodious infancy. Of the process of manufacture-how the forest, the mine and the animal kingdoms are robbed of their choicest products to furnish forth a tabernacle for the god of music to dwell in-we cannot speak in detail, since a volume would hardly suffice for a careful description of a labor so vast and intricate. It is doubtful if steam and the mechanical powers are anywhere compelled to accomplish more curious, difficult and widely varying tasks than when taxed to construct an instrument in which the extremes of strength and delicacy in mechanism are combined, as in a piano. We forget,



although we were told, how many tons' weight is figured from the tension of the strings of a grand piano tuned to Philharmonic pitch, but the sum represents a force greater than the united lifting power of a young ladies' seminary, with the teachers' and the dancing master's thrown in. And all these tuneful chords have to be rendered obedient to the executant's demand for a thunder tone or for the faintly whispered echo of his least appreciable fancy. In a word, each instrument is fashioned for the master's touch, and must insure the ready answer to his ever-varying demands. Such is the nature of the pianos which we found growing up before our very eyes, while we strolled through the several stories of this entertaining nursery.

There is an enthusiasm engendered in the manufacture of pianos, akin to that which the sculptor feels for the statue born of his imagination, and fashioned by his hand's cunning. One cannot be long in company with the Decker Brothers without perceiving this evidence of their pride in their work. The tone of each instrument is with them a matter of sleepless solicitude. It must be massive, bell-like in the bass; rich, warm, and full in the tenor, and fresh, bright, clear, almost sparkling and mellow, though penetrating, throughout the treble. The Decker tone is characterized by an indication of reserved power, so that when a fortissimo passage is played, the sound wells forth as if flowing from an eternal spring of harmonies. This feature is, indeed, most rare. Almost all pianos-even those of celebrated make-exhibit a loud, but shallow tone. It is this superabundant depth of tone that amazed the critics, and convinced their ears that the art of piano making had been substantially improved by the Deckers. To produce this unrivalled body of tone in all the varieties of the instrument-the Grand, the Square, the Upright-the Dccker Brothers have learned through years of patient investigation, the results of which are effectively embedied in several exceedingly ingenious patents. By their process of construction, the fullest advantages are derived from the use of the metallic plate, without experiencing any of the usual deleterious effects upon the tone; for in no portion of the scale are the strings permitted to come in close contact with the plate.

We are surprised to learn that not only the entire action, but even the ivory and ebony keys for their instruments, are made by the firm at their factory. In imposing this task upon themselves, the Deckers display rare conscientiousness. All other manufacturers, we believe, buy their actions from those who make this branch a specialty, or else import them from France. The Decker is the same as the best Frand action,

carefully made of the very finest materials, and adjusted to the most absolute nicety. Artists readily detect this superior mechanism of their action over the best that can be imported.

Our attention was directed to many wonderful labor-saving appliances introduced or perfected by the proprietors; but of these none surprised us so much as the patent apparatus for impinging the veneers upon the bodies of the instruments, whereby the process is simplified and rendered more effective, while the time of the operation is so greatly reduced that what formerly took an hour may now be accomplished in ten minutes. The Deckers have grafted upon German thrift and thoroughness the American inventive faculty; and this rare combination has produced the grand results that are now hourly adding to their tame as makers of piano-fortes, the like of which many of our cotemporaries have forestalled us in saying "we never heard before."

From the well ordered manufactory to the Decker warerooms, Union Square, was a ride that we were easily persuaded to take. Here we encountered many musical gentlemen who are worthy of being considered the cream of the profession. Among them were S. B. Mills, J. II. Bonawitz, Sigismund Lasar, Theodore Thomas, Alfred Pease and Dr. Damrosch. One of the knot of notables was arousing the energies of a Grand piano destined for concert use. It was the counterpart of this instrument that a few weeks ago startled the critics, as explained at the opening of this random reminiscence, and we were fortunate in hearing its powers tested under such effective hands as were now sporting with the keys. Unquestionably these Grands possess the noblest, the most satisfying tone of any piano known to us. The artists find in them points for admiration which a layman is not supposed to be able to discover. The Deckers have been careful not to fall into the error of making the tone too brilliant at the outset. This is done to catch the common car, by makers who are in hot haste to grow rich, but it is poor policy, for this excessive brilliance is soon succeeded by a husky, metallic tone, whereas by infusing a highly sympathetic body of tone into the instrument at first, it gradually attains the necessary amount of lustre through nse, and preserves its purity and delicate musical quality to the end of a long career.

Our investigations sufficed to convince us, and would have done so had we even been more skeptical, that the Decker piano is worthy of the sweeping endorsements that have been accorded it by the press, and that it may be very many years before the old or the new world will be able to delight us with its superior.



Mr. Mills has rarely asserted the brilliance, precision and power of his remarkable technique so definitely as in the exacting work demanded by the Kreutzer sonata, and the infinitely varied task imposed upon the executant by Liszt in his superb fantasie. He found his triumph sure at the conclusion of each effort, and applause was liberally bestowed. Some measure of compliment for the success should be ascribed to the Grand piano-forte on which Mr. Mills performed. This instrument was from the factory of the Decker Brothers, Union Square, and is a notable example of the singular degree of perfection attained in the production of pianos for the concert-room. The artist-world may be congratulated upon the addition of such valuable instruments to the list of renowned pianos.

#### [From the Jewish Messenger, April 12, 1872.]

Decker Brothers have patented machinery acknowledged by every artisan as the best that can be conceived for that purpose. Without the aid of such machinery no other piano can be put together ensuring such strength and durability; consequently many parts of their Piano will hold together as long as the nature of wood and metal will admit; no warping, splitting, cracking or breaking there. Everything is perfect at the outset, and will remain so, externally and internally. The iron plate, the stringing, the hammers, the agraffes and other parts of the mechanism—all patented—are arranged in a manner to produce a tone which we vainly look for in any other piano.

### [From the N. F. Tribune, May 18, 1872.]

Few names connected with the great and evergrowing Piano-forte Trade of our country are better known than that of the Decker Brothers of this city, whose quiet industry and sagacious enterprise have placed them in the high rank of American manufacturers. The pianos made by this house have more than once attracted critical approval, by virtue of special attributes of excellence that make them unique; and it is not surprising to hear-as, in musical circles, we very often do-that their popularity is widely and rapidly increasing. Whoever has traced the growth of Piano manufacture in the United States must, necessarily, have come several times upon the name of Decker Brothers as connected with ingenious inventions and important and valuable patents. The house first won distinction by a capital Square, in which great brilliancy was attained without the sacrifice of sweetness, and to which certain peculiarities of the action imparted

a distinctive character. It then turned out a Grand, that remains to this day among the best in volume of tone and in carrying power. Not content with these achievements, and with the encomium and popular patronage thus elicited, the Decker Brothers have now brought forward an Upright piano, made upon a new plan, and, on some accounts, manifestly preferable to any other instrument of the kind now in use. In shape, this piano corresponds to the customary model. One peculiarity is the substitution of Spiral Springs in the place of leather straps-as used in all other Uprights-to connect the keys with the hammers. This, like most other really valuable inventions, is a simple device; and the wonder is, as in many kindred cases, that nobody ever thought of it before. The spiral springs are made of steel, and they act in such a way as to permit a much freer use and more frequent and rapid repetition of the keys than have ever before been rendered possible. These springs move so quickly, too, that the force of the hammer-blows is greatly increased, and hence the tone of the instrument is augmerted and enriched. No matter how fast the performer may play, every note struck on the key-board meets with a prompt, full, clear and ringing answer. Another peculiarity of the Decker Upright is found in the form of the iron frame, which is so made that strings can be used of greater length than have hitherto been employed in any piano of this class. A strong and sonorous bass-instead of the usual thin grumble-results from this improvement, while the treble is rendered clear, full, and of real singing quality. Still another characteristic merit-especially obvious to the tuner or regulator—occurs in the composition of the works. By the simple turning of a screw, half of the action of this piano is released and dropped forward, so as to allow of free access to the entire mechanism. In other Uprights the whole of the action has to be taken out and separated before regulating is possible. It is to be noted, also, that the soft pedal in the Decker Upright is so arranged that the performer, hy touching it, can shift the whole action-as in the case of a Grand; and the tone so produced, though soft and sweet, is perfectly clear, and neither muffled nor drowsy. Every part of this instrument, indeed, is marked by vitality. The tone is round and solid, like that of a Grand; and, as in the earlier and better known works of the Decker Brothers, the invaluable attributes of power and sweetness have been attained by the simplest means. This piano-forte is not a make-shift, to be stuck in a corner for show, but a real work of scientific art, designed to hold its own with the best, and to give its possessor full satisfaction. The thoroughness and the devotion to art which have all along charac-



terized the workmanship of the Decker Brothers are once more shown in this. They won their success by solid merit; they hold it by unremiting effort in the same direction.

[From the New York Correspondent of the Boston Saturday Evening Gazette, Dec. 17, 1871.]

In moving about in society one finds the Deeker instrument in the parlors of our older wealthy families, whose home circles are so many permanent centres of refined taste-people who travel comfortably to Europe, who import only genuine works of art, who represent the highest intellect and social culture of which we can boast. I don't suppose our Tweeds, our Connollys, or our Garvevs have furnished their various palaces and villas with Decker instruments-their reputation was probably not flashy enough for the loud tastes of such improvised gentility. And so with our local musicians. To those who know aught of the process of the manufacture of pianos, an insight into that followed by this firm at once discloses the secret why their pianos are necessarily the finest that are made.

[From the Toronto Mail, Feb 8, 1873.]

(The following extract is from a critique on the performances at the University of Toronto, on the occasion of the Annual Conversazione of the University College Literary and Scientific Society.)

Mr. J. D. Kerrison gave a piano-forte solo with commendable effect, the instrument used being a Decker Brothers Concert Grand. As this was the first occasion on which the Decker Grand has appeared at our public concerts, a few words in reference to its distinguishing characteristics may not be considered out of place. For several years past, the pianos manufactured by the firm of Decker Brothers, New York, have, notwithstanding severe competition, been gaining more and more in public estimation. The great charm of the "Decker" is, that it possesses none of that metallic clang, which to European cars is so objectionable in most American instruments. But in addition to this desirable qualification, the "Decker" has considerable volume of tone, an elastic touch, and the utmost clearness of articulation. Its sostenuto power is equal to that of a Steinway, as was evinced last night by the effect it gave to the cantabile passages in Mr. Kerrison's "Reverie." The treble portion of the instrument is finer, and of a more pearl-like character than that of any European piano we have heard; indeed, so pure is the tone that many people wrongly imagine that it is deficient in power. The opinions expressed last night by the audience, in reference to the new piano, were, in every case, favorable.

[From the Toronto Evening Globe, Feb. 8, 1873.]
(The following is from an article reviewing the same event.)

Mr. Kerrison, who conducted the concert, performed two pieces on the piano, one of them a "Reverie," of no inconsiderable beauty, composed by himself, and the other, Gottschalk's "La Tasquinade." The latter was well calculated to test the capabilities of both the player and the instrument. On the part of the musician a mechanism as nearly faultless as possible is demanded; and in the piano, if the piece is to have its full effect, the action must be so fine, that no matter how rapidly it may be played, each note is heard distinctly. In both these particulars the performance was eminently satisfactory. The piano used on the occasion was a "Decker Brothers Grand," the first of those instruments ever played on in public in this

[From Watson's Art Journal, Feb. 1, 1873.]

The Graud piano of Decker Bros. was used by Mr. Bonawitz on this occasion, and under his hands its truly magnificent qualities were fully developed. We were quite prepared to admire this instrument, for it is the legitimate successor of the first Grand piano made by the firm, which we noticed years ago. We were present at the first appearance of their first Grand piano, and we recorded our surprise and approval, and its remarkable success at that time.

Nearly three years have since elapsed, and today their Grands prove the correctness of our then recorded judgment. They are noble instruments of the first-class, with every quality necessary to sustain their cloims as concert pianos. Their tone is large and has all that vibrant quality which is best calculated to fill a large hall, while, at the same time, their tones are perfectly distinct when their greatest power is called into play. Tho medium tone throughout the scale is singularly beautiful, and all the enforcement simply increases the quantity, without changing the quality of the tone. The general character of the tone is round and melodious and at the same time large and outspeaking. It is at the same time brilliant and telling. The touch is as near perfection as we can well imagine; it is as easily governed to produce the faintest whisper, as to roll out the loudest forte. It is, indeed, in every respect a superh instrument, and ranks among the few great Grand pianus of the world. In the vocal accompaniments, on Wednesday evening, its delicious tones blended with the voices to perfection, so truly sympathetic are they in their quality.

[From the N. F. Democrat (German), Feb. 2, 1873.]

The instrument used in this concert was a beautiful new Grand, from the celebrated establishment of Decker Brothers, 33 Union Square. We have heretofore had frequent occasion to call attention to the superior instruments of this firm, and can to-day only renew the encomiums then bestowed upon them. The Grand combines with a most elegantly finished exterior and incomparable power, fullness and flexibility of tone, such as has never until now been known in the manufacture of piano-fortes. Mr. J. 11. Bouawitz, the well known pianist, by his excellent performance of Liszt's "Tanuhauser March," displayed all the brilliant qualities and advantages of this beautiful instrument so admirably that the many ardent lovers of the art there present, listened with charmed cars to the majestic chords and unceasingly beautiful musical rhythms of the composition. It will not be saying too much if we assert that no factory in the world has ever turned out a more perfect concert instrument than this masterpiece of the Messes, Decker Brothers.

[From the N. Y. Hebrew Leader, Feb. 7, 1873.]

The brilliant dramatic entertainment and concert, given for a charitable purpose, a few evenings since at the Terrace Garden Theatre, under the direction of that energetic manager, Mr. Augustin Daly, has elicited many appreciative criticisms from the press, and secured to the Decker Brothers, whose Grand piano-forte was used on the occasion, an unprecedented amount of deserved compliment. In this unanimous chorus of praise we most willingly join, for it is always a pleasure to be able to pay a prompt tribute to success. The Concert Grand which these eminent manufacturers furnished Mr. Bonawitz for his solo work on the evening referred to, is an incomparable product of skill and integrity. The music elicited from that matchless instrument astonished all ears. The auditorium of the theatre is equal to that of the Academy of Music, but the piano was heard to the full as advantageously in all parts of the hall as though played in an ordinary drawing room.

No piano was ever subjected to a severer test of its power, as twenty-five hundred people who heard the Decker played on this occasion can attest. If artists are to have instruments of this magnificent class—of this majestic sonority allied to such indescribable brilliancy and melodious purity of tone—then indeed has a new era in piano playing dawned upon us. How Rubinstein can now revel in such oceans of harmony! It has always seemed to us as if that great master exhausted his instrument—but the Deckers have

now provided against that contingency by securing to each note of the entire scale a depth of tone that seems to well forth as if it were bubbling from an everlasting spring of melody. The effeet of this success in musical circles is almost incredible. Artists of all grades are excited over it. There would hardly have been a greater commotion at their warerooms if the brothers had found a gold mine in their cellar. The new instrument looks like any other of its elegant species that you have seen, but when it speaks, then indeed it tells its own story of its immense superiority. The opinion is general among the cleverest connoisseurs that such a piano-forte as this at the Vienna Exhibition will beat the world as easily as a Steinway did in Paris five years ago. Considering what perfection in the art of pianomaking had to be surpassed, this triumph of the Decker Brothers is simply wonderful, and yet not inexplicable when we recollect that the Deckers have long enjoyed the reputation of being themselves the most expert artisans in the business, and the inventors of a number of sterling improvements in the method of constructing the instrument. They have now the honor of having advanced the standard of excellence in this department of manufacture several degrees beyond the farthest limit heretofore attained by the most celebrated makers of the world.

[From the Golden Age, May 25, 1872.]

In Union Square, at the Decker Piano warehouse, we have just seen an Upright Piano which, iu a compact space, like a nightingale's throat, imprisons enough music to fill a whole house, and to charm a whole neighborhood. It is not every parlor that is large enough for the ordinary square instrument; but the cosiest cottage, the smallest drawing-room, the most cramped library or student's cloister, could find room for one of these Upright Pianos giving forth its melody like a bird in a cage, or like a full heart overflowing with song. What a comfortable piece of furniture for a ship's cabin or the captain's state-room! What a delightful co-tenant in one's solitary quarters in a hotel! A good piano is a moralist-soothing the discords of families, quieting the trouble of wounded hearts, and (yea, verily) even solacing the disappointments of thwarted politicians! In a certain sense all pianos, therefore, are "upright!" for they inspire morality and minister to religion. But the Upright Piano which is specially so styled in the Decker establishment, is an instrument which, instead of lying prone and flat in a box, and being thus somewhat of "the earth, earthly," stands erect like David's harp, and lifts its head upward like a heaven-aspiring psalm. It



is worthy of its name, and there is only one deleterious effect produced by it: the beautiful instrument throws its chance listener into a strange discord with the commandment "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods;" or, at least, when we happened to hear its crisp and ringing tones, we were not able (even with all the self-restraining help of our life-long orthodoxy) to keep from coveting our neighbor Decker's caged warbler for our own house.

[From Watson's Art Journal, March 1, 1873.]

The German Club of Hoboken, an organization of the highest social standing, were favored with a concert, whereat a programme worthy of Leipsic or Vienna was presented, on Sunday evening last, at the new Hall attached to the hospitable establishment. Dr. Damrosch, who superintended the affair, called to his aid Mr. S. B. Mills, Mme. Damrosch, Mr. De Korbay, anda Decker Brothers Grand Piano. And here let us pause for a moment to remark upon the promptness with which the artistic world hereabouts has echoed our warmly-expressed admiration for the superb manufacture of that estimable firm. We predicted that these superior instruments would soon find favor with our most intelligent players, and, as if to emphasize and corroborate our assertion, Mr. Mills and Dr. Damrosch seize the first opportunity for leading the future fashion in the choice of pianos.

It would not be fair to close this rapid glance at the prominent points of this worthy entertainment without a remark upon the success attained by the piano-forte with which Mills acquired his latest laurels. It was a more brilliant instrument than its mate, which the Decker Brothers provided for Mr. Bonawitz, upon an occasion recently noticed at length in our columns, but the tone was equally deep, lasting and refined. It seemed to increase the artist's confidence in his own powers,-and we had almost said, to anticipate his wishes, so prompt is the response of its action. It is for the pianist himself to say how much of the real pleasure afforded by his playing may be justly ascribed to the magnificent volume and indescribably melodious quality of tone which the memorable performance of the Liszt Fantasic and the "Kreutz 'r Sonata" of Beethoven evoked from the new famed Decker Brothers Concert Grand.

[From the Arcadian, N. Y., March 20, 1873.]

It is nunecessary for us to comment upon the excellence shown in their manufacture by these admirable artisans and musical enthusiasts. To do so would be no compliment to the superior intelligence of *The Arcadian's* readers. If any-

thing better than, or even as good as a Decker Brothers Concert Grand, is discovered by the prize-givers at Vienna, we shall go any requisite distance to see and hear it.

[From the Philadelphia Enquirer, March 27, 1873.]

Mr. Bonawitz's transcriptions of the Freyschulz overture and the grand chorale, "A Strong Castle," are remarkable for their broad and grand treatment, and the almost orchestral effeets he produces. We have rarely heard finer evidences of power, no small portion of which was due to the superb Grand piano of Decker Bros., on which he played. It is an instrument of the first quality. The tone is powerful throughout the scale; the bass has a grand senority; the middle range is rich, sympathetic and vocal, while the treble is bright and telling. and at the same time full and melodious. The tone is so free and the power so great that it over-filled the foyer of the Academy, crowded as the foyer was with ladies, which is saying a great deal when we also admit that, with all the largeness of power, the tone remained pure and unbroken. Mr. Bonawitz played several of his delicate selections upon a new Upright piano of Decker Bros., with marked and charming effect. It is a remarkable instrument, and excited general admiration, not only for the rare power and beauty of its tone, but for its chaste and elegant form.

[From the Philadelphia Age, March 26, 1873.]

\* \* Quite a sensation was created among musical connoisseurs by the new pianos, now for the first time heard in public. Some, among us, have known the Decker Brothers' Square pianos most favorably, but few could imagine the delightful richness and power of tone, without that disagreeably harsh, metallic clang which we observe in some of our recently-made instruments, and general admiration was expressed at the sostenuto, singing quality, which seems to belong specially to the Decker Grand. This masterpiece of musicianly workmanship is the result of many years' brainwork and practical experiments by the Decker Bros., and seems so near perfection, or at least so superior to other instruments, that we do not see where the next improvement is to start from.

[From the Philadelphia Evening Telegraph, March 26, 1873.]

\* \* A feature of the concert was the introduction of the Decker pianos, which are a novelty in our concert rooms. They are remark-



ably fine instruments, judging from the evidence of their quality afforded yesterday. The greater portion of the selections were played upon a Grand piano, which for volume, purity and richness of tone we have rarely heard approached. There is an utter absence of the cold, metallic quality so generally perceptible even in the best of our concert-room pianos, and in its place marvellous softness and sweetness, with almost infinite capability of expression. The resources of the piano in point of brilliancy and power are well-nigh unrivalled, but their defect has always been an mability to interpret, with even measurable success, the deep, thrilling emotions of the soul. This defect has been very largely overcome in both the Grand and Upright Decker. The latter instrument was also heard yesterday, and probably pleased even more than the Grand, because of its more marked superiority over the generality of Uprights. The manufacturers have succeeded in imparting to it a roundness, fullness, and richness of tone, surprising to those accustomed even to the best of such instruments. Its treble, instead of the usual thin, wiry character, possesses a deliciously soft, musical quality that is very grateful, while the bass rolls out with a volume and deep sonorousness that took the audience by surprise. Three selections, the D minor fantasia, a nocturne, and an impromptu scherzo, the last two by Bonawitz. were played upon it, being such as would display to advantage its peculiar qualities of power and sweetness. It came through the severe ordeal splendidly, amply sustaining its claim to the first rank among instruments of its class.

[From the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, March 26, 1873.]

\* The instruments used were the Decker Graud and Upright pianos, for which Mr. Wilham Blasius has the agency in this city. The Grand piano is a magnificent instrument, possessing a volume of tone that is inconceivable, and yet having this remarkable quality, that its sweetness and purity are retained even when the piano is taxed to its ulmost capacity by the player. This peculiarity was so striking under the manipulation of Mr. Bonawitz that it occasioned general surprise and enthusiastic delight

among those who were present. The Upright piano is constructed upon a new principle, which removes all the objections hitherto urged against such instruments. It was evident, vesterday, that the Decker Bros. have succeeded in producing an Upright piano which will enable those who prefer that form, to gratify themselves with the assurance that they have obtained an instrument as reliable and of as fine qualities as if they had selected a Grand or Square.

[From the N. Y. Weckly Review, Feb. 1, 1873.]

Mr. Bonawitz distinguished himself by a superior rendering of Liszt's celebrated transcription of the "Tannhauser March," the effect of which was largely enhanced by the admirable qualities of the Decker Grand piano used on the occasion. This instrument developed a volume of fine musical tone, such as we have never before heard from a piano.

[From the Sunday Times, N. Y., April 6, 1873.]

The new scale Concert Grand piano-fortes introduced by the Messrs. Decker Brothers, of No. 23 Union Square, have been heard frequently in public during the past few weeks in this and other cities. They have been used on these several oceasions by Mr. S. B. Mills; Prof. J. H. Bonawitz (at the Philadelphia Academy of Music); Mr. Alfred H. Pease; Prof. Andres, of Cincinnati: Mr. Emil Liebling, of Chicago; Mr. Carl Walter, in New York; and Mr. Kerrison, in Toronto. After every performance, the press in each locality has confirmed the judgment of the artists, and coincided with the opinion of the public that nothing superior to the splendor of tone of these instruments has ever before been heard. The Philadelphia Age says editorially that "the Decker Brothers Grand seems so near perfection, or at least so superior to other instruments, that we do not see where the next improvement is to start from," This is undoubtedly true; and, moreover, the superiority which these manufacturers have acquired for their Grands is correspondingly reached in both their Upright and Square instruments, which are esteemed incomparable in all respects. The name of Decker is bound to become a household word wherever musie is heard





### THE DECKER BROTHERS'

### IMPROMPTU. WALTZ

Composed expressly for "Decker Brothers' Illustrated Catalogue," and dedicated to

### SAMUEL SELIGMANN, Esq.,



Entered. according to Act of Congress, A. D. 1873, by Decker Bros., in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington. 1











### THE DECKER BROTHERS'







### CAUTION TO THE PUBLIC.

The Decker Brothers, 33 Union Square, New York, are the owners of the only patents issued by the United States Government to any one of the name of Decker, for improvements in piano-fortes.

In all genuine Decker Brothers' Pianos, the following line appears cast upon the iron plate, on the inner left hand side of the instruments:

"Decker Brothers' Patent, June 2d, 1863."

As some unscrupulous parties have, from time to time, sought to palm off inferior or wholly worthless pianos upon the public, by naming their wares "Decker Pianos," purchasers should take care to see that the above line is plainly stamped upon the iron plate precisely as here printed.

Decker Brothers have but one establishment, namely, at 33 Union Square, New York.

Redundantable in Workmans